

ATTACHMENT J-2

RESPONSE LETTERS ON NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP), RESPONSE LETTERS ON SUPPLEMENTAL NOP, RESPONSE LETTERS ON NOTICE OF INTENT (NOI)

RESPONSES TO THE 2004 NOTICE OF PREPARATION

This attachment contains the following responses to the 2004 Notice of Preparation:

Responses from Regional Agencies

- Metropolitan Transportation Authority (November 30, 2004, 1 page)
- The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (December 15, 2004, 6 pages)
- Southern California Association of Governments (December 10, 2004, 7 pages)

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Metro

Metropolitan Transportation Authority

One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

213.922.2000 lei
metro.net

70006 CB, GQ

November 30, 2004

Ms. Cathy Bechtel
Riverside County Transportation Commission
4080 Lemon Street, 3rd Floor
P.O. Box 12008
Riverside, CA 92502-2208

RECEIVED
DEC 03 2004

RIVERSIDE COUNTY
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Dear Ms. Bechtel:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Mid County Parkway Project. This letter conveys recommendations from the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) concerning issues that are germane to our agency in relation to the proposed project.

As the Mid County Parkway Project is a key east-west regional transportation corridor, please include in the DEIR any impacts this project will have upon MTA service or municipal operator service such as that of Foothill Transit.

The MTA looks forward to reviewing the Draft EIR. If you have any questions regarding this response, please call me at 213-922-6908 or email at chapmans@metro.net. Please send the Draft EIR to the following address:

LACMTA
One Gateway Plaza
Attn: Susan Chapman
Long Range Planning, 99-23-2
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

Sincerely,

Susan Chapman
Program Manager, Long Range Planning

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70181

THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
Environmental Planning
700 North Alameda
3rd Floor
Los Angeles, California 90012
Phone 213-217-6337; Fax 213-217-5620

FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL COVER SHEET

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DEC 20 2004

RIVERSIDE COUNTY
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

DATE: 12-20-04

TO: MS. CATHY BECHTEL

FAX NO: (951) 787-7920

FROM: MS. LAURA SIMONEK

COMMENTS:

Attached is The Metropolitan Water District of
Southern California's comment letter on the
Notice of Preparation for the Draft EIR/EIS for
the Mid-County Parkway Corridor Project.
The original signed letter will follow tomorrow
(12/21/04) via Federal Express.

TOTAL NUMBER OF PAGES TRANSMITTED INCLUDING COVER SHEET: 6

Note: If you do not receive all the pages, please call 213-217-6337

B.1.9.2.1

Dec 20 2004 11:44 P.01

MWD ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN FAX: 213-217-5620



MWD

METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Executive Office

December 15, 2004

FEDERAL EXPRESS

Ms. Cathy Bechtel
Riverside County Transportation Commission
4080 Lemon Street, 3rd Floor
Riverside, CA 92502-2208

Dear Ms. Bechtel:

Notice of Preparation for the Draft Environmental
Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report for the Mid County Parkway Corridor Project

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan) has reviewed the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the Mid County Parkway Corridor Project, located within western Riverside County. The Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) is the lead agency for the proposed project. The Mid County Parkway, which would be a key east-west regional transportation corridor within Riverside County, is proposed to extend from Interstate 15 on the west to State Route 79 on the east. The project is primarily located along the Ramona Expressway, Cajalco Road, and El Sobrante Road. Metropolitan is providing comments as a potentially affected public agency and a potential responsible agency, as defined in the State of California Public Resources Code, §21069. As indicated in Table A in the NOP, Metropolitan is a potential Responsible and Trustee Agency and RCTC would require approval from Metropolitan to cross Metropolitan lands and or facilities as defined herein.

As you know, Metropolitan owns and operates several facilities within the boundaries of the proposed study area, including Lake Mathews, the Colorado River Aqueduct, the Upper Feeder pipeline, the Lower Feeder pipeline and the Lake Perris Bypass pipeline and pumpback facilities. In addition, Metropolitan's approved Central Pool Augmentation (CPA) pipeline and treatment plant are within or adjacent to the boundaries of the proposed study area. Furthermore, Metropolitan maintains ownership and jointly manages the Lake Mathews Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) reserve (also known as the Lake Mathews - Estelle Mountain Core Reserve), as shown on the attached graphic (see Figure 2).

Metropolitan has worked jointly with RCTC and the County of Riverside over the past eighteen months on the proposed Mid County Parkway and is committed to continuing work with the lead agency in support of this important regional transportation project. However, there are several

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critical issues that must be resolved before RCTC approves the project and Metropolitan considers granting approval for the crossing of our lands and/or facilities.

These issues include:

Issues Related to the Lake Mathews MSHCP

The Lake Mathews MSHCP provides Endangered Species Act coverage for and fully mitigates impacts related to a variety of past and future Metropolitan projects, as well as impacts to ongoing operations of Lake Mathews. It is critical that Metropolitan maintains the mitigation and take authorization outlined in the MSHCP in full effect and in perpetuity. As currently proposed in the Draft EIS/EIR, each of the build alternatives for the Mid County Parkway would impact the Lake Mathews - Estelle Mountain Core Reserve. Metropolitan requests that the lead agency consider developing an alternative that would fully avoid impacts to the Lake Mathews - Estelle Mountain Core Reserve.

The lead agency, with Metropolitan's consent and overview, would need to review and assess the legal ramifications associated with modifications to the Lake Mathews - Estelle Mountain Core Reserve and determine the risks and benefits to Metropolitan. It is Metropolitan's understanding that the MSHCP, which established the Lake Mathews - Estelle Mountain Core Reserve, only allows for adding species or lands - not for changing or exchanging lands. As such, the lead agency would need to address the plausibility of modifying the MSHCP given the constraints outlined in the legal documents that established the reserve. Metropolitan requests that the lead agency initiate discussions with us to ensure that our take authorization is maintained in full effect.

Operational and Maintenance Issues at Lake Mathews

The lead agency also needs to address long-term impacts from the Mid County Parkway to the Lake Mathews Water Quality & Drainage Management Plan. The proposed project has the potential to affect drainage patterns and water quality at Lake Mathews, a critical drinking water reservoir for southern California. It is imperative to both Metropolitan and the County of Riverside that the Draft EIS/EIR addresses potential impacts to Lake Mathews from a water quality perspective, to ensure that a reliable, high-quality drinking water supply is maintained over the long term.

Furthermore, the implementation of the Mid County Project must allow uninterrupted operational access to the perimeter shoreline of Lake Mathews. Metropolitan utilizes Lake Mathews primarily as a storage reservoir for untreated water, however a large variety of other operational activities occur at Lake Mathews as well. Uninterrupted, long-term access to the perimeter shoreline at Lake Mathews will be required to: (1) perform annual shoreline vegetation clearing

activities, (2) allow patroller access in order to maintain security around Lake Mathews, and (3) allow general operational access for emergency activities, should the need ever arise.

The proposed project must also avoid impacts to Metropolitan's operational area along the north shore of Lake Mathews, near the intersection of El Sobrante and La Sierra roads. This area is utilized for management of Metropolitan's construction unit, which is essential to emergency response efforts within Metropolitan's service area. The proposed project's environmental documentation needs to analyze the potential impacts to these facilities and address avoidance and/or minimization measures to ensure minimal impacts to Metropolitan's operations.

Operational and Maintenance Issues at Other Existing and Future Metropolitan Facilities

The proposed project must also avoid impacts to Metropolitan's approved CPA project, in particular the future treatment plant at Eagle Valley and the future distribution system leaving Eagle Valley. This approved project is an essential component in Metropolitan's obligation to deliver reliable, high-quality water to both Riverside and Orange counties, and as such the lead agency should specifically address any potential impacts of the Mid County Parkway project to the CPA. In addition, Metropolitan's future treatment plant at Eagle Valley will most likely begin construction prior to implementation of the Mid County Parkway project – the lead agency's Draft EIS/EIR needs to acknowledge the treatment plant project and address avoidance and/or minimization measures to ensure minimal impacts to the CPA treatment plant project.

In addition, Metropolitan is concerned with potential impacts from the proposed project to other Metropolitan facilities within the project area. These facilities include the Colorado River Aqueduct, the Upper Feeder pipeline, the Lower Feeder pipeline, and the Lake Perris Bypass pipeline and pumpback facilities, and the approved CPA pipeline. Metropolitan must be allowed to maintain its rights-of-way to its facilities at all times in order to repair and maintain the current condition of those facilities. It is necessary that the lead agency avoid potential impacts to Metropolitan's facilities that may result from the proposed project, including any restrictions on Metropolitan's rights-of-way and/or any operations and maintenance activities. In order to avoid impacts, coordination with Metropolitan must occur during the planning process and written approval from Metropolitan for proposed design plans should be obtained prior to project approval. Metropolitan requests that the lead agency's Draft EIS/EIR acknowledge Metropolitan's facilities and address avoidance and/or minimization measures to ensure minimal impacts to our rights-of-way and/or facilities.

Other Issues

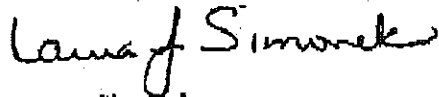
Metropolitan requests that the lead agency analyze in the draft EIS/EIR the consistency of the proposed project with the growth management plan adopted by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). Metropolitan uses SCAG's population, housing, and employment projections to determine future water demand.

Ms. Cathy Bechtel
Page 4
December 15, 2004

In addition, Metropolitan encourages projects to include water conservation measures. Water conservation, reclaimed water use, and groundwater recharge programs are integral components to regional water supply planning. Metropolitan supports measures such as using water-efficient fixtures, drought-tolerant landscaping, and reclaimed water to offset any increase in water use associated with the proposed project.

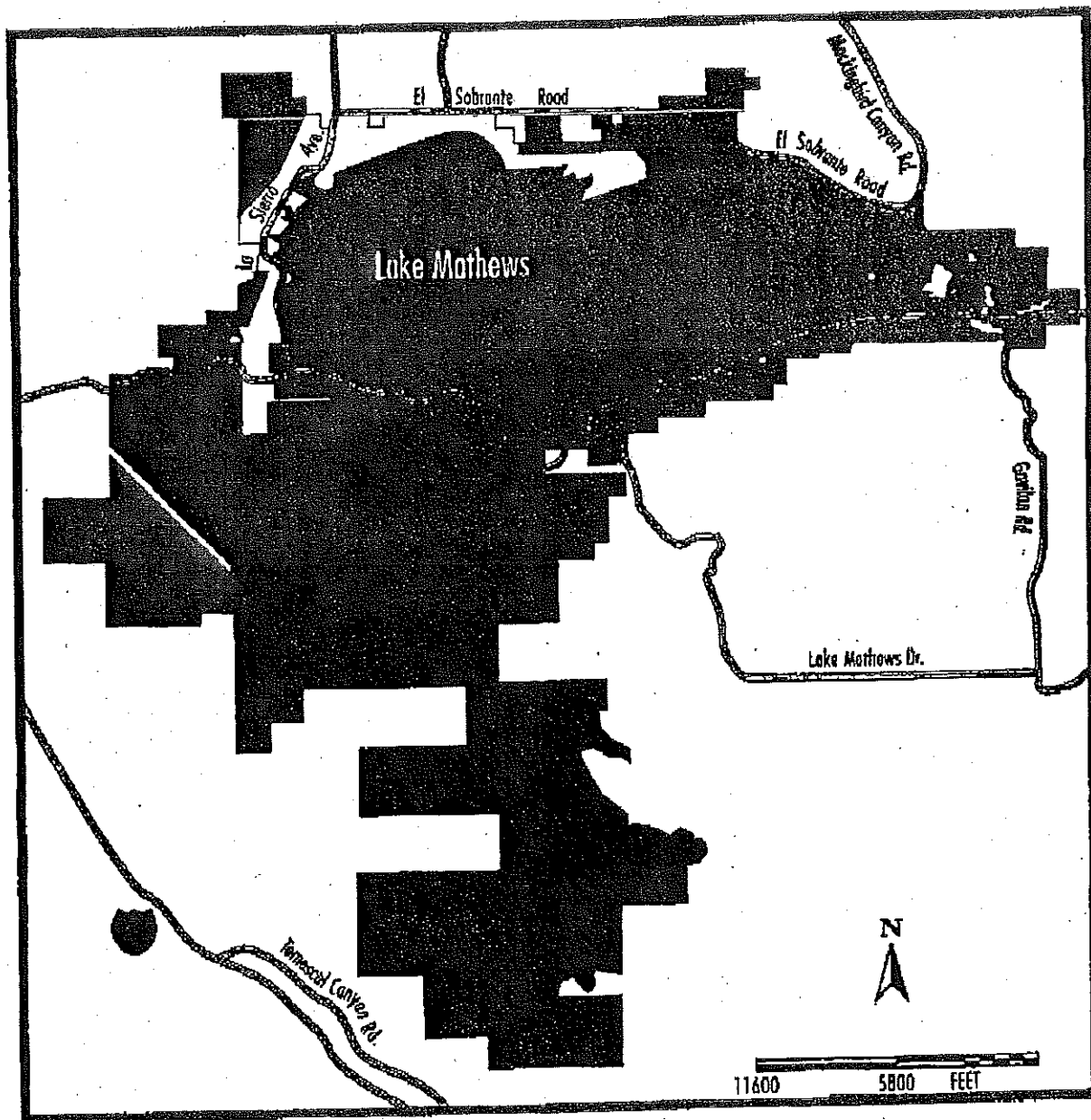
We appreciate the opportunity to provide input to your planning process and we look forward to continued coordination with the County of Riverside on this project. Mr. John Vrsalovich of Metropolitan's Facility Planning Team has been designated as Metropolitan's contact to coordinate with RCTC. Mr. Vrsalovich can be reached at (213) 217-6066.

Very truly yours,



Laura J. Simonek
Manager, Environmental Planning Team

JAH/rdl
(Public Folder/EPU/Letters/08-DEC-04B.doc - Cathy Bechtel)
Enclosure: Planning Guidelines



- Land Under Negotiation for Conservation Easements
- RCHCA
- State Wildlife Conservation Board
- MWD Ownership in Core Reserve
- Private
- BLM
- Core Reserve Boundary
- Roads/Highways

**Riverside County Habitat
Conservation Agency's
Proposed Lake Mathews -
Estelle Mountain Core Reserve
Under Long-Term SKR HCP**

Figure 2



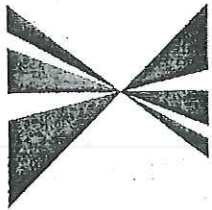
MWD
METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Source: Riverside County

Dec 20 2004 11:46 P.06

MWD ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN FAX: 213-217-5620

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

ASSOCIATION OF
GOVERNMENTS

Main Office

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Grand Terrace • Susan Longville, San Bernardino •
Gary O'Neil, Ontario • Deborah Robertson, Rialto

Ventura County: Judy Mkels, Ventura County •
Glen Becerra, Simi Valley • Carl Morehouse, San
Buenaventura • Toni Young, Port Hueneme

Orange County Transportation Authority:
Charles Smith, Orange County

Riverside County Transportation Commission:
Robin Lowe, Hemet

Ventura County Transportation Commission: Bill
Davis, Simi Valley

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559-9/07/04

December 10, 2004

Ms. Cathy Bechtel
Riverside County Transportation Commission
4080 Lemon Street, 3rd Floor
P.O. Box 12008
Riverside, CA 92502-2208

RECEIVED
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RIVERSIDE COUNTY
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

RE: **Comments on the Notice of Preparation for a Draft Environmental Impact
Statement / Environmental Impact Report for the Mid County Parkway
Corridor Project - SCAG No. I 20040781**

Dear Ms. Bechtel

Thank you for submitting the **Notice of Preparation for a Draft Environmental Impact Statement / Environmental Impact Report for the Mid County Parkway Corridor Project** to SCAG for review and comment. As areawide clearinghouse for regionally significant projects, SCAG reviews the consistency of local plans, projects, and programs with regional plans. This activity is based on SCAG's responsibilities as a regional planning organization pursuant to state and federal laws and regulations. Guidance provided by these reviews is intended to assist local agencies and project sponsors to take actions that contribute to the attainment of regional goals and policies.

SCAG has evaluated the **Notice of Preparation** and has determined that the proposed Project is regionally significant and directly relates to the policies and strategies in SCAG's Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide (RCPG) and Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The proposed Project involves the construction or expansion of freeways. The proposed Project is consistent with the 2004 RTP.

Policies of SCAG's Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide and Regional Transportation Plan, which may be applicable to your project, are outlined in the attachment. We expect the **Draft EIS/EIR** to specifically cite the appropriate SCAG policies and address the manner in which the Project is consistent with applicable core policies or supportive of applicable ancillary policies. Please use our policy numbers to refer to them in your **Draft EIS/EIR**. Also, we would encourage you to use a side-by-side comparison of SCAG policies with a discussion of the consistency or support of the policy with the Proposed Project.

Please provide a minimum of 45 days for SCAG to review the **Draft EIS/EIR** when this document is available. If you have any questions regarding the attached comments, please contact me at (213) 236-1867. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey M. Smith
JEFFREY M. SMITH, AICP
Senior Regional Planner
Intergovernmental Review

B.1.9.2

**COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP A
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
FOR THE
MID COUNTY PARKWAY CORRIDOR PROJECT
SCAG NO. I 20040781**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed Project considers a number of alternatives to provide for a transportation facility that will effectively and efficiently accommodate regional east-west movement of people and goods between and through San Jacinto, Perris, and Corona within western Riverside County.

CONSISTENCY WITH REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND GUIDE POLICIES

The Growth Management Chapter (GMC) of the Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide contains a number of policies that are particularly applicable to Mid County Parkway Corridor Project.

3.03 The timing, financing, and location of public facilities, utility systems, and transportation systems shall be used by SCAG to implement the region's growth policies.

GMC POLICIES RELATED TO THE RCPG GOAL TO IMPROVE THE REGIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE

The Growth Management goals to attain mobility and clean air goals and to develop urban forms that enhance quality of life, that accommodate a diversity of life styles, that preserve open space and natural resources, and that are aesthetically pleasing and preserve the character of communities, enhance the regional strategic goal of maintaining the regional quality of life. The evaluation of the proposed project in relation to the following policies would be intended to provide direction for plan implementation, and does not allude to regional mandates.

3.18 Encourage planned development in locations least likely to cause environmental impacts.

- 3.20 *Support the protection of vital resources such as wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, woodlands, production lands, and land containing unique and endangered plants and animals.*
- 3.21 *Encourage the implementation of measures aimed at the preservation and protection of recorded and unrecorded cultural resources and archaeological sites.*
- 3.22 *Discourage development, or encourage the use of special design requirements, in areas with steep slopes, high fire, flood, and seismic hazards.*
- 3.23 *Encourage mitigation measures that reduce noise in certain locations, measures aimed at preservation of biological and ecological resources, measures that would reduce exposure to seismic hazards, minimize earthquake damage, and to develop emergency response and recovery plans.*

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The 2004 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) also has goals and policies that are pertinent to this proposed project. This RTP links the goal of sustaining mobility with the goals of fostering economic development, enhancing the environment, reducing energy consumption, promoting transportation-friendly development patterns, and encouraging fair and equitable access to residents affected by socio-economic, geographic and commercial limitations. The RTP continues to support all applicable federal and state laws in implementing the proposed project. Among the relevant goals and policies of the RTP are the following:

Regional Transportation Plan Goals

- Maximize mobility and accessibility for all people and goods in the region.
- Ensure travel safety and reliability for all people and goods in the region.
- Preserve and ensure a sustainable regional transportation system.
- Maximize the productivity of our transportation system.
- Protect the environment, improve air quality and promote energy efficiency.
- Encourage land use and growth patterns that complement our transportation investments.

Regional Transportation Plan Policies

- Transportation investments shall be based on SCAG's adopted Regional Performance Indicators.

Performance Indicator	Performance Measures	Definition	Performance Outcome
Mobility	• Average Daily Speed	Speed-experienced by travelers regardless of mode.	10% Improvement
	• Average Daily Delay	Delay-excess travel time resulting from the difference between a reference speed and actual speed. Total daily delay and daily delay per capita are indicators used.	40% Improvement
Accessibility	• Percent PM peak work trips within 45 minutes of home • Distribution of work trip travel times		Auto 90% Transit 37% Auto 8% Improvement Transit 8% Improvement
Reliability	• Percent variation in travel time	Day-to-day change in travel times experienced by travelers. Variability results from accidents, weather, road closures, system problems and other non-recurrent conditions.	10% Improvement
Safety	• Accident Rates	Measured in accidents per million vehicle miles by mode.	0-3% Improvement
Cost Effectiveness	• Benefit-to-Cost (B/C) Ratio	Ratio of benefits of RTP investments to the associated investments costs.	\$3.08
Productivity	• Percent capacity utilized during peak conditions	Transportation infrastructure capacity and services provided	
		• Roadway Capacity - vehicles per hour per lane by type of facility • Transit Capacity - seating capacity utilized by mode	20% Improvement at known bottlenecks N/A
Sustainability	• Total cost per capita to sustain current system performance	Focus is on overall performance including infrastructure condition. Preservation measure is a sub-set of sustainability.	\$20 per capita, primarily in preservation costs
Preservation	• Maintenance cost per capita to preserve system at base year conditions	Focus is on infrastructure condition. Sub-set of sustainability.	Maintain current conditions
Environmental	• Emissions generated by travel	Measured/forecast emissions include CO, NOX, PM10, SOX and VOC. CO2 as secondary measure to reflect greenhouse emissions.	Meets conformity requirements
Environmental Justice	• Expenditures by quintile and ethnicity	Proportionate share of expenditures in the 2004 RTP by each quintile.	No disproportionate impact to any group or quintile
	• Benefit vs. burden by quintiles	Proportionate share of benefits to each quintile/ethnicity.	

Proportionate share of additional
airport noise by ethnic group...

- Ensuring safety, adequate maintenance, and efficiency of operations on the existing multi-modal transportation system will be RTP priorities and will be balanced against the need for system expansion investments.
- RTP land use and growth strategies that differ from currently expected trends will require a collaborative implementation program that identifies required actions and policies by all affected agencies and sub-regions.
- HOV gap closures that significantly increase transit and rideshare usage will be supported and encouraged, subject to Policy #1.

AIR QUALITY CHAPTER CORE ACTIONS

The **Air Quality Chapter** core actions related to the proposed project includes:

- 5.07 *Determine specific programs and associated actions needed (e.g., indirect source rules, enhanced use of telecommunications, provision of community based shuttle services, provision of demand management based programs, or vehicle-miles-traveled/emission fees) so that options to command and control regulations can be assessed.*
- 5.11 *Through the environmental document review process, ensure that plans at all levels of government (regional, air basin, county, subregional and local) consider air quality, land use, transportation and economic relationships to ensure consistency and minimize conflicts.*

CONCLUSIONS

1. Since the refinement of eight project alternatives and the selection of a locally preferred strategy is included in the environmental review phase of the proposed project, SCAG requests the project sponsor to review and discuss this phase of the project with the Regionally Significant Transportation Investment Peer Review Group (RSTIS). The discussion should include: the work plan and schedule, the analytical screening methodology, use of performance indicators, public involvement process and the process by which the LPA is selected. To assist the project sponsor, RSTIS will meet in January, March, May, July, September and November

in 2005 to provide the discussion forum as described in the adopted 2004 Regional Transportation Plan. At the conclusion of the EIS/EIR phase, SCAG will proffer a Letter of Completion as documentation to the federal funding agencies that the planning process leading up to the selection of the LPA is complete.

2. All feasible measures needed to mitigate any potentially negative regional impacts associated with the proposed project should be implemented and monitored, as required by CEQA.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

Roles and Authorities

THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS (SCAG) is a *Joint Powers Agency* established under California Government Code Section 6502 et seq. Under federal and state law, SCAG is designated as a Council of Governments (COG), a Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA), and a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). SCAG's mandated roles and responsibilities include the following:

SCAG is designated by the federal government as the Region's *Metropolitan Planning Organization* and mandated to maintain a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process resulting in a Regional Transportation Plan and a Regional Transportation Improvement Program pursuant to 23 U.S.C. '134, 49 U.S.C. '5301 et seq., 23 C.F.R. '450, and 49 C.F.R. '613. SCAG is also the designated *Regional Transportation Planning Agency*, and as such is responsible for both preparation of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) under California Government Code Section 65080 and 65082 respectively.

SCAG is responsible for developing the demographic projections and the integrated land use, housing, employment, and transportation programs, measures, and strategies portions of the *South Coast Air Quality Management Plan*, pursuant to California Health and Safety Code Section 40460(b)-(c). SCAG is also designated under 42 U.S.C. '7504(a) as a *Co-Lead Agency* for air quality planning for the Central Coast and Southeast Desert Air Basin District.

SCAG is responsible under the Federal Clean Air Act for determining *Conformity* of Projects, Plans and Programs to the State Implementation Plan, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. '7506.

Pursuant to California Government Code Section 65089.2, SCAG is responsible for *reviewing all Congestion Management Plans (CMPs) for consistency with regional transportation plans* required by Section 65080 of the Government Code. SCAG must also evaluate the consistency and compatibility of such programs within the region.

SCAG is the authorized regional agency for *Inter-Governmental Review* of Programs proposed for federal financial assistance and direct development activities, pursuant to Presidential Executive Order 12,372 (replacing A-95 Review).

SCAG reviews, pursuant to Public Resources Code Sections 21083 and 21087, Environmental Impacts Reports of projects of regional significance for consistency with regional plans [California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Sections 15206 and 15125(b)].

Pursuant to 33 U.S.C. '1288(a)(2) (Section 208 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act), SCAG is the authorized *Areawide Waste Treatment Management Planning Agency*.

SCAG is responsible for preparation of the *Regional Housing Needs Assessment*, pursuant to California Government Code Section 65584(a).

SCAG is responsible (with the Association of Bay Area Governments, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments, and the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments) for preparing the *Southern California Hazardous Waste Management Plan* pursuant to California Health and Safety Code Section 25135.3.

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